

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SA, YE, UR

SUBJECT: US AND SOVIET MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO YAR

REF: JIDDA 0621

1. US ARMS AID: DEPARTMENT AWARE FROM REFTELS THAT SAUDIS HAVE PRODUCED LIST OF ITEMS THEY PROPOSE TO PURCHASE FROM US FOR USE OF YEMENIS. EMBASSY AND DOD CONSIDER THIS TO BE USEFUL FORWARD MOTION IF THAT LIST CAN NOW BE REVIEWED AND LOA'S PREPARED. SAUDIS HOWEVER SHOW NO MOTION ON A NUMBER OF OTHER ASPECTS OF PROPOSED PROGRAM. THEY HAVE NOT YET DECIDED WHETHER THEIR YEMEN MILITARY ASSISTANCE ELEMENT WILL DEPEND DIRECTLY ON PRINCE SULTAN OR ON G-3 STAFF. SIMILARLY, THEY WERE UNABLE TO PROVIDE INFORMATION DURING TALKS WITH DOD/EMBASSY REPS CONCERNING FUNDING OF EQUIPMENT, METHOD OF TRANSFER, AND RATES OF DELIVERY. QUESTION AS TO WHETHER US WILL MAKE DIRECT DELIVERY TO HODEIDA OR WHETHER SAUDIS WILL REGULATE DELIVERIES IS ALSO UNRESOLVED.

2. HOPEFULLY LOA'S' PHRASEOLOGY WILL HELP TO SETTLE ISSUE OF MANNER OF DELIVERY AND DESTINATION, BUT SOME DEBATE AFTER RECEIPT BY SAUDIS OF DRAFT LOA'S SHOULD BE EXPECTED. WITH AT LEAST A YEAR BEFORE ITEMS ON SHOPPING LIST WILL BECOME AVAILABLE, SAUDIS NO DOUBT FEEL THERE IS SUFFICIENT TIME TO COPE WITH SUCH MATTERS.

3. SOVIET ARMS AID: OF MORE IMMEDIATE INTEREST IS POSSIBILITY

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OF ARRIVAL IN HODEIDA SHORTLY OF MUCH MORE IMPORTANT SOVIET

SHIPMENT THAN ANTICIPATED. SAUDI MILITARY ATTACHE AT SANA REPORTEDLY INFORMED US THERE THAT HE WAS AWARE OF IMPENDING ARRIVAL OF IMPRESSIVE SOVIET SHIPMENT OF ARMS. SAUDI NEGOTIATORS WITH EMBASSY/DOD TEAM YESTERDAY, HOWEVER, INDICATED DISBELIEF THAT SOVIET ARMS SHIPMENT INCLUDED ANYTHING BUT MINOR ITEMS, SPARE MOTORS AND OTHER SPARE PARTS. WE WOULD NATURALLY LIKE TO KNOW AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TRUE NATURE OF SOVIET SHIPMENT. IF IT IS AS IMPORTANT AS SOME REPORTS MAINTAIN, IT MAY BE THAT US/SAUDIS ARE GETTING INTO PRESIDENT HAMDI'S GAME TOO LATE AND WITH TOO FEW CHIPS.

4. I HAVE ALSO GATHERED THAT THERE CONTINUES TO BE DIFFERENCES AT HIGH SAUDI LEVELS ON DESIREABILITY OF ARMING YEMENIS, WITH RELUCTANCE ON MODA SIDE HEADED BY SULTAN, WHILE CROWN PRINCE FAVORS EFFORT. IF PRESIDENT TAODI IS RECEIVING SOVIET SHIPMENT OF MUCH GREATER SIGNIFICANCE THAN SAUDIS KNOW OF THERE COULD BE SOME HEATED DEBATE AT THE TOP ABOUT WHETHER TO PROCEED IN THIS VENTURE. (IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT HAMDI HAS LEVELLED WITH SULTAN OR FAHD ABOUT SIZE OF SHIPMENTS FROM USSR AND THEY HAVE KEPT INFO FROM MIDDLE LEVEL MINDEF NEGOTIATORS AND FROM US.)

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